

der discussion what should be done with one of the great war industries plants. The immediate problem was whether twelve or fifteen millions should be spent in putting it in condition or whether it should be abandoned and salvaged. One after another of the men around the table gave his judgment and opinion. Mr. Mellon sat quiet. Presently the President, at the head of the table, turned toward him and said:

"But we haven't heard from the Secretary of the Treasury. What does he think about this proposal? I should like to have his views."

Mr. Mellon was hesitant. Then he spoke up in his low, quiet, dry voice. The matter was not exactly in his department; he had not given the problem any study; he was not familiar with all the conditions and the full situation; it was a question of some importance; he did not wish to be understood as giving his final opinion unless he had opportunity to go into the whole matter more fully, but he thought he could indicate possibly what his final judgment might be, if allowed to tell what he had done in a somewhat similar and personal case. He owned a war plant that stood him about fifteen or sixteen millions and just the other day the question had come up whether to spend that much more money on it or to wipe it off. "I told 'em to scrap it," concluded Mr. Mellon.

"Well, sir," said the man who was telling the story, "the discussion in the Cabinet ended right there. The Cabinet felt that if Mr. Mellon could afford to scrap his plant the United States gov-

ernment could afford to follow the same course. When the Secretary of the Treasury does participate in a discussion he usually nails it down."

Mr. Mellon will take care of our money. That is what he has done all his life. It is a tiring job and takes its toll of a man. You know even on the most casual contact that he is cautious and careful and prudent and wary beyond all words. He gives away oodles and heaps of his own money. His benefactions and charities run into immense sums, but you somehow know that he never wasted a dime. He is acquisitive. He knows how to manage, conserve and breed money. I suspect that most of his dollars are stallion dollars and earn their keep. He is a developer and a builder. He has an oil business nearly as big as the Standard's. He is possibly the chief figure in the steel car business. He brought the aluminum industry in this country to its present pitch.

I do not choose to make the absurd statement at this late day that he is an exceptionally able man, though you might never suspect it at the first or even second or third meeting. If he is anything of an economist or statesman, if he has a wide vision, and understanding, in addition to his capacity for acquisition, and his qualities as a financier and banker, then he too may become a great Secretary of the Treasury like Alexander Hamilton and cause abundant streams of revenue to gush forth. If he does, the Republican party will never forget him. Streams of revenue are its whole present quest.

EDWARD G. LOWRY.

Dante As A Moral Teacher

EXCEPT for those who believe that they can enjoy a poem without knowing what it means, the first requisite of an honest and intelligent discussion of Dante should be a frank recognition of the fundamental difference between his view of the world and that which is distinctively modern. Dante lives in a closed world, limited in time and space, and authoritatively mapped out for all time by Aristotle and the Christian Fathers. Man—meaning Christendom inhabiting the Mediterranean basin—is the centre of this universe. Around man's abode all the stars revolve in eternal and perfect circles. The plan of this universe is so well revealed that there are not and there cannot be in it vistas of essentially new truth or of new possibilities of achievement. It is a world in which the beginnings of human history are not lost in the dim past nor is its future particularly

perplexing. The number of generations from Adam to Christ is definitely known and the number of generations from Christ to the final day of judgment is also limited. Heaven and hell have a strictly limited capacity. The mystic rose of heaven was half filled by the Hebrew saints who lived before Christ, and it would be relatively easy to figure out the maximum number that hell can possibly contain after the resurrection when the sinners' earthly bodies will all be located there.

This aspect of Dante's fundamental belief is not popular today. His expositors and commentators try to avoid it by two suggestions, first, that Dante does not mean to be taken literally, and second, that Dante's moral and spiritual ideas are independent of his view of the physical universe. Both of these suggestions are flagrantly false.

That Dante meant to be understood in an al-

legoric as well as in a literal sense, his dedicatory letter to Can Grande, and passages in the *Inferno*, in the *Purgatory*, and in the *Convito* explicitly affirm. When commentators then go on to assert that the punishments of the *inferno* represent only the mental condition of the sinners in the act of sinning, they are grossly unfair to Dante and to his readers. To say that Dante did not believe in the actual and eternal post-mortem suffering of the damned is to accuse him unjustly of heresy and wilful preaching of what the church had expressly condemned; but, worse yet, it makes nonsense of the references to creation, the day of judgment, the resurrection, and other ideas which are the warp and woof of the whole *Divine Comedy*. It is doubtless true that many of the punishments in the *inferno* may be viewed as symbolizing the inner state of the sinner. This is clear in the case of the hypocrites who drag themselves around in heavy armor gilded on the outside but leaden inside. It is even more subtly true in his picture of illicit love—Paolo and Francesca locked in each other's arms and driven by the wind of passion in a sunless air deprived of all other human ties which enrich true love. But it is absurd to pretend that the punishment of heretics like Farinata or schismatics like Mohammed describes *their* state of mind. In the case of Capaneus we are explicitly told that though his continuing to defy Jove would be in itself sufficient punishment, he nevertheless receives also the outer punishment meted out to the violent. The fact is that all the punishments in Dante's *Inferno*, though seldom devoid of a certain horrible appropriateness, are essentially vindictive in their nature. Retributive punishment is the essential of mediaeval justice, just as the law and duty of vengeance was an essential part of its code of honor. God's honor, like that of the mediaeval knight or more primitive Corsican, would be tarnished if he did not take vengeance against those who wilfully or unwilfully insulted him, and the mediaeval view of law and justice required that the magnitude of one's vengeance should be commensurate with one's power.

Similarly does a careful reading of Dante reveal the absurdity of the frequent suggestion that we can reject the mediaeval view of nature and yet keep the moral and spiritual ideas based upon it. Dante's very distinction between the morally higher and lower is bound up with his geocentric astronomy. That Dante's moral views cannot be ours is obvious when we reflect that he places in hell not only innocent children, but noble characters like Plato, Socrates and Farinata, while high in heaven are placed an oppressive and polygamous despot like Solomon, a simpleton like

Adam, and a savagely-persecuting bishop of dubious morality like Folquo. But perhaps the most instructive case is that of Ulysses, who would be condemned to hell by Dante not only for his stratagem at Troy, but also for inducing others to join him in his "eagerness to win experience of the world" and to venture beyond the geographic limits set for mankind, viz. the Strait of Gibraltar. In Dante's perfectly created world there is no need for intellectual exploration or moral adventure. The whole of necessary wisdom has been revealed and the rightly diligent can acquire it. We who live in a limitless world not especially created for us, where conditions are changing and the future most uncertain, must seek new wisdom, not only as to the physical world, but as to man's nature, possibilities and tasks; and the mediaeval morality of fixed order and obedience to authority must become a subordinate part of the morality of changing or growing life.

To those whose vision of the world has been widened as a result of modern exploration and science, Dante's morality is essentially negative. His supreme good, the beatific vision of the "Love that moves the stars" is generally unattainable in this life and comes only to a chosen few as a matter of grace. It has little sympathy with the earthly joys and sorrows which fill our life here. Though called Love, hell is forever in the centre of it. The inquisition, or the burning of heretics, is its true earthly symbol as Spanish Catholics, like Unamuno, insist to this day. To the great multitude it offers no positive plan of life beyond "Fear God and avoid Evil (or sin)."

It is doubtless true that the dangers which surround human life are so many that without the pre-rational organic fear which makes us shrink from the familiar we should all soon perish. But without the spirit of daring and adventure this fear would paralyze all life. Hence wherever life is expanding, the morality of fear with its eternal prohibitions or taboos is actually disregarded.

This explains why Dante's political theory is so utterly barren. He has no conception of the multitudinous forces within the community that intelligent direction can harmonize into a brighter and fuller life. Order, according to him, must be imposed by an emperor from without. The silly and pedantic arguments by which Dante tries, on the basis of childish myths in Livy and Virgil, to prove that this emperor can be no other than the Holy Roman Emperor, then represented by a Hohenstaufen, is not merely indicative of his times. It is also indicative of Dante's complete other-worldliness and lack of any civic and political vision.

Despite their atrocious factionalism, the growing cities of Italy showed wisdom in rejecting these claims of the Empire; for in the oriental despotism of Frederick II they had a visible example of what imperial order and authority actually brought.

It was not only in politics that Dante, like other prophets, was behind the day and generation that he denounced. His scholastic learning made him totally blind to the significant movements of his own times, to the growing industry and commerce, to the opening up of intercourse with other peoples, of which his older contemporary and countryman, Marco Polo, was such a notable representative. This is important if we remember that the merchant adventurers, like the early Greek merchants, were but the pioneers of the navigators, explorers, great scientific investigators and mechanical inventors who followed them.

The widening of our view of the world by science is intimately connected with a change of emotional attitude to sin and punishment. In Dante's time it was possible to view all nature as following harmonious, eternal laws against which man and the devil were the only rebels. Modern biologic study, however, leads us to think of man's actions as in general due to causes or circumstances similar to those which influence other organisms; and the maladaptations which disfigure human life and render it so tragic are but extensions of the maladaptations of which all organic life is full. The earthquakes and plagues, which sweep away plants and animals as well as human beings, are just as natural as the paths of the stars, which we now know to be neither perfect circles nor eternal, but subject to the unpredictable flux of generation and decay which has been called cosmic weather. Hence we are not afraid today to admit greater kinship and sympathy with purely animal life and suffering.

The conviction is certainly widespread today, that great and important as are our differences in disposition and achievement, we are all of the same human clay, subject to the same instinctive impulses and weaknesses or diseases of the flesh. Certainly the idea that some men are all perfect and deserve eternal blessedness, while others are all wickedness and deserve eternal damnation, cannot be justified in the forum of enlightened human experience. If sanctification, crucifixion and resurrection are to have any meanings in that forum, they must refer to something which all of us undergo in diverse ways in our daily toil. The ease with which, in moments of complacency, or when judgment is beclouded by resentment, we attribute the brutish passions and inhuman frauds of others to an unnatural prompting of the devil, cannot maintain

itself after honest knowledge and sober judgment. We become more grave when knowledge and imagination enable us to realize somewhat what would have happened to us if we had been similarly circumstanced.

There are those who with light and irresponsible rhetoric berate our times as too soft and sentimental because we do not insist on sufficient severity in our punishments, or because we regard some crimes as diseases. But actual history shows the frightful futility of the unutterable cruelty that was formerly meted out indiscriminately to the criminal, the insane, and the sick—all suspected of being inspired or possessed by devils. We may be sure that reaction against this wasteful cruelty has not as yet gone far enough. But it is encouraging to hear the words of a kindly Dominican Father: "My Faith requires me to believe in the existence of Hell, but not that anyone is there." This may not express the dominant attitude of his church, but it certainly represents a marked modern tendency. At any rate, few nowadays can read with enjoyment the horrible punishment meted out in Dante's *Inferno* to a thoroughly honest, gifted, and devoted soul like Piero delle Vigne because in his high-mindedness he could not bear to live amid undeserved disgrace and cruel suffering. The whole idea that God created men and women knowing that they will sin and thus subject themselves to eternal torture is odious today; and when Dante says that hell was founded by Eternal Love we feel that the cruelty of his life and the violence of his times poisoned his conception of love as well as deprived him of an indispensable support for moral sanity, to wit—the gift of laughter. The idea of an eternity of suffering is horrible enough, but to glorify it and call it, as Dante does, "supreme wisdom and primal love" makes us ashamed of the human nature that is capable of entertaining such horrible perversity and disloyalty to our natural sympathy.

This rejection of Dante's claim as a moral teacher, like the rejection of exaggerated claims for the magnitude of his learning, does not deny his obvious greatness as a poet—though Dante himself and the men of his generation down to Petrarch emphatically subordinated his poetry to his moral philosophy. Dante undoubtedly manifests to a supreme degree the distinctive gifts of the poet, heightened imaginative vision and divine music of language. In his workmanship, too, he shows both intense titanic energy and a perfection of form that is classic and definitive. But this is clearly due not to his mediaeval views but to the passionate vitality and intensity of his nature. Doubtless the acceptance of any philosophy or

"ordered scheme of things entire," gives a certain integrated unity to the material of the poet's experience and makes for profound simplicity and dignity on a truly grand scale. But we must not exaggerate the consistency of the mediaeval world view or of Dante's representation of it. Omitting the hardly successful reconciliation of the dogmas of free-will, grace, and predestination, we may note that in the passages which in modern times are taken as typical of Dante at his best, e. g. the incident of Paolo and Francesca or Ugolino, Dante distinctly breaks through his mediaeval faith and generously draws our pity, though such pity according to his own assertion shows lack of faith in the justice of God's judgment on the wicked. Dante also rises above his mediaeval faith by endowing some of his sinners with superb human dignity. Thus the picture of Farinata holding all hell in contempt, of the indefeasible nobility of Brunetto Latini and Aldobrandi, or of the heroic appeal of Ulysses, is hardly consistent with the orthodox hatred of the sinner. It is rather typical of the dawning renaissance of which Dante, despite his mediaeval creed, may be regarded as a glorious example. The naïve way in which his pride of ancestry and of poetic achievement breaks through his pious humility is most instructive in this respect.

Moreover, though the modern liberal cannot without self-stultification accept Dante's mediaeval faith, he cannot afford to ignore its wonderful strength. Through long and dark ages, it preserved—even if it cramped—the essentials of humanity within its hard and forbidding shell. While the morality of order, authority, and repression cannot be for us the supreme law, it will always continue to represent an essential part of the truth. No great achievement is possible without the renunciation and self-mastery which is the result of long and arduous training. This is perhaps the first lesson that the young and unenlightened have to learn, though the bondage of authority, alas, often leaves men too weak for the life of freedom. Then, too, we must reckon with the unripe wisdom of modern moralists who emphasize the struggle, "upward and onward," but have not the courage to accept frankly the natural goals of enjoyment and the satisfaction of the heart's desire. Discouraged by such an outlook, men naturally abandon the struggle and prefer to live in a closed, unventilated, mediaeval world. "Lead Thou me on, I do not ask to see" is the expression of a profoundly natural human weakness. We may be sure, therefore, that Dante will long continue to be a favorite of those who value above all the passive virtues of submission. In all respects, indeed, he is the poet of order and meas-

ure. Despite the strain on the limits of good taste in some of the horrors of the *Inferno* and expressions of personal rancor in the highest heaven, Dante is par excellence the poet of civilized life, courtliness and polished manners. He has a real contempt for the ways of uncultivated country folk and cares not for the wild and rugged in nature any more than for the untamed desires of the human heart. Like other city-bred men he has an eye only for the peaceful in nature. The turbulence of wind, rain and snow, the evanescent play of clouds, the surge of the sea, and the massive grandeur of woods and mountains do not solicit him as much as the formal gardening of flowers and the steady play of light. He is not even intrigued by the white marble hills of Carrara.

Though Dante's poetry will thus for ages continue to be among humanity's most cherished possessions, his negative and other-worldly morality will continue to make the *Divine Comedy* more alien to the modern spirit than the more distant but more human world of Homer. The peace and order which we demand of modern morality and ultimately of modern poetry—the two cannot be forever sharply separated—are the peace and order which nourish an ever growing harmonious human life on this earth, which, despite its limited possibilities, supplies the material for the heart's desire.

MORRIS R. COHEN.

The Sex of the Inferiority Complex

IS the Inferiority Complex (one feels somehow that these things ought to be written in capitals) masculine or feminine? That is mostly masculine or mostly feminine—for Inferiority Complexes like Projections, Identifications, and Suppressed Desires in the form of libidos stalking the world for objects of fixation like unto their maternal or paternal ancestor, are blessings which on the whole know no sex. They add variety and zest to the dull and stupid existence of all self-centred personalities.

At least such existences would be dull, unbearably dull, and probably no less stupid, without these exhilarating influences, and in their distribution it seems as though providence had tried to be impartial. The chances are it failed, so perverse are the unconscious influences of sex of the best of conscious intentions. The chances are, and evidence seems to favor the side of chance, that even